



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

HEARING EXAMINER STAFF SUMMARY

**PROJECT NO. 00-136-(5)
VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 52796
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 00-136
OAK TREE PERMIT NO. 00-136
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. 00-136**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project applicant proposes to develop 102 single-family dwellings and associated supporting infrastructure including local roadways, two 250,000-gallon water tanks with a pump station, water quality treatment basins, and an emergency secondary fire access road within a 230.5-acre Project site. The proposed residential lots would occupy approximately 21.2 acres of the Project site. The Project would require approximately 1,600,000 cubic yards of cut material, which includes 300,000 cubic yards of over-excavation, with all cut material being used as fill material on the site. The architectural styles proposed for the single-family dwellings would encompass Craftsman, Spanish, Tuscan, Colonial and eclectic styles. Typical building materials, including stucco, siding, and stone veneer, would be used. The remaining improved areas of the Project site would include 3.8 acres for the water tanks/pump station, 4.3 acres of water quality basins, 9.7 acres of public streets, and 1.4 acres for the emergency secondary fire access road. On-site developed-area drainage would be diverted to filtration ponds prior to discharge into Pico Creek. The Project applicant proposes to widen the segment of Pico Canyon Road that generally traverses the northern boundary of the Project site in accordance with the approved alignment of the road; the improvements also will be consistent with the County's designation of the roadway as a major arterial. A 24-foot wide paved emergency vehicle access road, connecting with Verandah Court to the east, would be maintained to provide gated emergency fire access.

The Project applicant also proposes the preservation of approximately 165 acres of undeveloped, natural area within the southern and western portions of the Project site. The current drainage of the Project site would be altered by the construction of %A+ Street and Project water quality basins at the location where Pico Creek and Wickham Canyon currently join. Wickham Canyon would also be planted with indigenous native trees and shrubs.

REQUIRED ENTITLEMENTS

- Vesting Tentative Tract Map to create 102 single-family lots, eight (8) open space lots, 10 public facility lots, and one lot for a private fire access road (121 total lots) on 230.5 gross acres in the A-2-2 zone.

- Conditional Use Permit (~~%CUP+~~) to authorize develop a density-controlled development in a hillside area and for grading exceeding 100,000 cubic yards of soil combined cut and fill materials.
- Oak Tree Permit to authorize removal of one non-heritage-status oak tree.
- Environmental Assessment No. 00-136: The Initial Study determined that an Environmental Impact Report (~~%EIR+~~) was required. A Draft EIR has been prepared pursuant to CEQA reporting requirements.

LOCATION AND ACCESS

The Project site is located on the 26300 block of Pico Canyon Road in Stevenson Ranch. Regional access to the Project site is provided via Interstate 5 (I-5) located approximately 1.6 miles east of the Project site.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Project site is primarily vacant and consists of undeveloped terrain with moderate to steep variations in topography. Several small to medium drainage courses traverse through the site. Vegetation within the Project site includes, but is not limited to, chaparral and coastal sage scrub habitats, riparian habitats, and non-native grassland in the process of transition as they recover from a wildfire in 2010. A total of 15 Coast Live Oaks are located on-site. Pico Canyon Road generally traverses the northern boundary of the Project site, with a small portion of the roadway segment occurring in the northeast corner of the site. Various unimproved access roads and trails traverse though the site.

A single-family residential community, Southern Oaks, abuts the Project site on the east. The area to the west of the Project site is mostly undeveloped within Pico Canyon, but this area includes the remaining historic buildings of Mentryville and the Pico Canyon Oil Field Well No. 4. Mentryville and the Pico Canyon Oil Field Well No. 4 are state historic landmarks managed by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC). The Pico Canyon Trail, a four mile trail mostly adjacent to Pico Canyon Road and providing access to Mentryville, meanders through Pico Canyon in areas generally to the west and southwest of the Project site. The areas directly to the north and south of the Project site are mostly undeveloped with moderate to steep variations in topography.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The Department of Regional Planning (~~%Department+~~) determined by way of an Initial Study and identified in the Notice of Preparation sent to agencies, that an Environmental Impact Report (~~%EIR+~~) was necessary for the Project. The areas of potential environmental impact addressed in the Draft EIR (~~%DEIR+~~) include the following:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology & Soils
- Greenhouse Gases

- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology & Water Quality
- Land Use & Planning
- Noise
- Public Services (Law Enforcement, Fire Protection, Parks, Schools)
- Recreation
- Transportation & Traffic
- Utilities & Service Systems

The following areas required no further environmental review as described in the Initial Study.

- Agriculture/Forestry
- Energy
- Mineral Resources
- Population/Housing

Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

As identified in the DEIR, after implementation of the required mitigation measures as enforced by the Project's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, the Project would not result in significant and unavoidable impacts to the environment.

LEGAL NOTIFICATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

Pursuant to the provisions of Sections 22.60.174 and 22.60.175 of the County Code, the community was appropriately notified of the Hearing Examiner Hearing by mail, newspaper, property posting, library posting and on the Department's website. Newspaper notices were published in The Signal and La Opinion on December 8, 2015. Notices to property owners located within a 1,000-foot radius of the property boundaries, and to two local libraries, were mailed on December 1, 2015. Notices were verified to be posted on the subject property and were made available on the Department's website on December 1, 2015. On December 7, 2015 a Notice of Completion and Availability (NOC-NOA) of a DEIR was posted at the County Recorder's office. The NOC-NOA was sent by mail to required agencies including the State Clearing House and other interested parties. The NOC-NOA is also posted on the Project site and on the Department's website.

PREVIOUS CASES/ZONING HISTORY

The applications for Vesting Tentative Tract Map, CUP, and Oak Tree Permit were originally filed in 2000. Therefore, the project is being analyzed under the requirements of the 1990 Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (SCVAP), rather than the 2012 One Valley, One Vision+ SCVAP.

STAFF EVALUATION

Project consistency with the County of Los Angeles General Plan, compliance with the County Zoning Ordinance and development standards, neighborhood impact and land use compatibility, and evaluation of the applicant's ability to meet all requirements for a Vesting Tentative Tract Map, Conditional Use Permit, and Oak Tree Permit, and corresponding burdens of proof as applicable, will be determined subsequent to the Regional Planning Commission public hearing. The Hearing Examiner Public hearing is established primarily to receive public testimony on the merits of the Project as analyzed in the Draft EIR prior to

Project consideration by the Regional Planning Commission (~~Planning Commission~~) at a later date.

Project Issues

A number of development issues regarding the proposed project were raised by public agencies in response to the Notice of Preparation of an EIR and through the agency Screencheck DEIR review process. These issues have been addressed in the DEIR.

Several issues have been identified as areas of controversy through the public review process regarding the Initial Study/Notice of Preparation, Scoping Meeting, and the current DEIR public review. Comments include issues related to construction noise, construction air quality, construction and operational traffic, lack of school capacity, and visual considerations.

COUNTY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

County Department comments and conditions will be finalized subsequent to the Hearing Examiner public hearing and prior to consideration by the Planning Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members of the public provided written comments regarding the project at the time of this report.

REMAINING PROCEDURES

Since the DEIR public comment period does not close until January 21, 2016, mitigation measures and draft conditions pertaining to the Project will be completed following the Hearing Examiner public hearing. Once the DEIR comment period closes, the Department will review public comments received, will draft responses to those comments, and draft the Final EIR and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. Staff will also prepare California Environmental Quality Act (~~CEQA~~) Findings, draft Findings and Conditions pertaining to the Project related entitlements, and submit documentation to the Planning Commission for consideration prior to the Planning Commission hearing to be set at a future date. The Commission will approve or deny the entitlements requested. Any decision made by the Commission may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors within 15 days. Should this occur, the Board of Supervisors will also hold a hearing, at which it will approve or deny the entitlements. Any action by the Board of Supervisors is final.

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01/07/16